ILMINSTER URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINISTRY OF HEALTH LIBRARY

Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health for year ending 31st December 1939

Mr Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1939.

Circular 2067 from the Ministry of Health directs that this report shall be short and more in the nature of an interim report.

Social Conditions of the Area.

The outbreak of War had its effect on the social conditions of the district, due to the calling up of reservists in the services, and the conscription of many young men, making necessary their replacement in industry and agriculture by older men or by women. This caused a great decrease in unemployment generally. Also a number of persons evacuated and otherwise entered the area during the Autumn and Winter months.

Incidence of Disease.

The year 1939 was a healthy year in this area. There was an outbreak of influenza in the early months of the year, but this was neither as extensive or prolonged as is usual at that time nor were the cases markedly severe.

As regards infectious Diseases.

There were five cases of Scarlet Fever all of which were admitted to the South Somerset Isolation Hospital with no deaths. There was an outbreak of measles 84 cases being notified, with no deaths. Whooping Cough, which together with measles became compulsorily notifiable throughout the County in September 1939 - 4 cases notified, no deaths.

Measles has for many years been a notifiable disease in Ilminster Urban District.

Tuberculosis 1 case of Respiratory and 2 cases of non Respiratory Tuberculosis were notified for the first time last year; one death occured from Respiratory Tuberculosis.

As regards deaths of children under 12 months this was a Nil Return.

The Hospital and Health Services remain much as in my previous reports, with the exception of emergency War arrangements.

The Ambulance services were augmented by the institution of a new Motor Ambulance, fully equipped and staffed by members of the Ilminster Men's Red Cross Detatchment. This Ambulance has already done some useful work since its inauguration in mid 1939.

The Water Supply was pure and abundant during the year. The yield was 150,000 gallons per diem of which 40,000 gallons per diem was transferred to the Chard Rural District Council.

Owing to the increased consumption of water due to the War schemes were considered as to increasing the rate of flow in the existing main or to duplicate the same. A Condy Chlorination Plant was installed during the year and worked satisfactorily.

A few houses are still on wells and private piped supplies.

Sewage Disposal

There are still 23 houses which are not on the sewer. The treatment is as before by broad irrigation over 27 acres. Schemes which were being considered to improve these treatment works had to be suspended owing to the War.

A new pump and 6 H.P. driving motor were installed at the lower end of Station Road to deal with the increased flow from that area.

The Milk Factory installed a preliminary treatment plant and tanks to equalise the flow of waste from this place.

Housing.

The Slum Clearance programme was proceeding normally during the first six months of the year. All borderline houses in the area were reinspected very carefully by the Housing Committee, Medical Officer of Health and Sanitary Inspector. Forty five more houses were listed to come before the Council for consideration re Demolition Orders in August 1939. Owing to the outbreak of War, this of course was not carried out.

The new Housing site in Butts Road chosen by the Council was not purchased, by order of the Ministry of Health on the outbreak of War.

Six new houses were erected during the year without state assistance.

Food Supply.

Milk Supply - There are 10 producers of milk on the register, and 13 distributors, 7 of these are distributors only and 6 distributors and producers. One supplementary licence to sell pasteurised milk was granted during the year.

Meat Supervision - Slaughter houses remain as before 2 Licensed and 3 Registered since September 1939. All meat is slaughtered at a Central depot and delivered to the district. Private Slaughter houses are now out of use.

I remain,
Yours faithfully,
C.C. COURT M.B.Ch.B.
D.P.H. M.O.H. Ilminster U.D.C.

30/8/40.